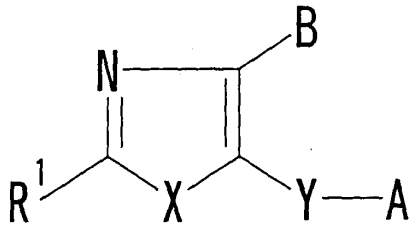
CLAIMS

1. A neurotrophin production/secretion promoting agent which comprises an azole derivative of the formula :




wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; X represents oxygen atom, sulfur atom, or nitrogen atom which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

2. A neurotrophin production/secretion promoting agent which comprises a prodrug of an azole derivative or a salt thereof as defined in Claim 1.

3. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein $R^1$ is a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted.

4. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein $R^1$ is an aromatic heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted.

5. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein $R^1$ is a nitrogen-containing 5-membered aromatic heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted.

6. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein $R^1$ is an imidazolyl group which may optionally be substituted.

7. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein A is a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, or a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted.

8. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein A is an aryloxy group which may optionally be substituted.

9. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein A is a phenoxy group substituted with an alkyl group which may optionally be substituted.

10. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein B is a phenyl group which may optionally be substituted.

11. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein Y is a divalent aliphatic hydrocarbon group.

12. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein X is -O-.

13. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein X is -S-.

14. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein X is $-NR^4-$ wherein $R^4$ represents a hydrogen atom, a hydrocarbon group which may optionally be substituted, an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, or a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted.

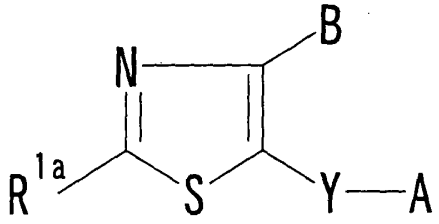
15. An agent according to Claim 1, wherein the azole derivative is 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-oxazolepropanol, 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-oxazolebutanol, 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-[3-(1-imidazolyl)propyl]-2-(2-methyl-1-

imidazolyl)oxazole, 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-oxazolepentanol, 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-[4-(1-imidazolyl)butyl]-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)oxazole, 3-[3-[4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-oxazolyl]propyl]-1-methyl-2,4-imidazolidinedione, 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-[3-(2-methoxyphenoxy)propyl]-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)oxazole, 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-[3-(3-methoxyphenoxy)propyl]-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)oxazole, 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-5-[3-(4-methoxyphenoxy)propyl]-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)oxazole, or 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-[3-(2-methylphenoxy)propyl]oxazole.

16. An agent according to Claim 1 which is a prophylactic/therapeutic agent for neuropathy.

17. An agent according to Claim 1 which is a prophylactic/therapeutic agent for peripheral neuropathy.

18. A thiazole derivative of the formula :




wherein $R^{1a}$ represents a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

19. A prodrug of a thiazole derivative or a salt thereof

as defined in Claim 18.

20. A compound according to Claim 18, wherein $R^{1a}$ is a nitrogen-containing 5-membered aromatic heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted.

21. A compound according to Claim 18, wherein $R^{1a}$ is an imidazolyl group which may optionally be substituted.

22. A compound according to Claim 18, wherein A is an aryloxy group which may optionally be substituted.

23. A compound according to Claim 18, wherein B is a phenyl group which may optionally be substituted.

24. A compound according to Claim 18, wherein Y is a divalent aliphatic hydrocarbon group.

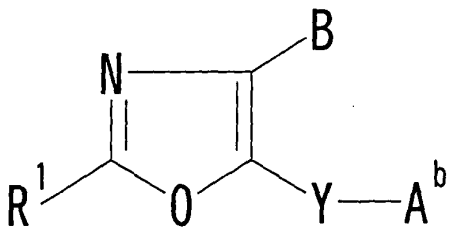
25. A pharmaceutical composition which comprises a thiazole derivative or a salt thereof as defined in Claim 18.

26. A composition according to Claim 25 which is a neurotrophin production/secretion promoting agent.

27. A composition according to Claim 25 which is a prophylactic/therapeutic agent for neuropathy.

28. A composition according to Claim 25 which is a prophylactic/therapeutic agent for peripheral neuropathy.

29. An oxazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; $A^b$ represents an aryloxy group which is substituted by an alkyl group and may further be substituted; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

30. A compound according to Claim 29, wherein $A^b$ is an aryloxy group which is substituted by an alkyl group.

31. A prodrug of an oxazole derivative or a salt thereof as defined in Claim 29.

32. A compound according to Claim 29, wherein $R^1$ is a nitrogen-containing 5-membered aromatic heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted.

33. A compound according to Claim 29, wherein $R^1$ is an imidazolyl group which may optionally be substituted.

34. A compound according to Claim 33, wherein $R^1$ is an imidazolyl group which may optionally be substituted by a $C_{1-10}$ alkyl.

35. A compound according to Claim 29, wherein B is a phenyl group which may optionally be substituted.

36. A compound according to Claim 35, wherein B is a phenyl

group which may optionally be substituted by halogens.

37. A compound according to Claim 29, wherein Y is a divalent aliphatic hydrocarbon group.

38. A compound according to Claim 37, wherein Y is a divalent $C_{1-4}$ aliphatic hydrocarbon group.

39. A pharmaceutical composition which comprises an oxazole derivative or a salt thereof as defined in Claim 29.

40. A composition according to Claim 39 which is a neurotrophin production/secretion promoting agent.

41. A composition according to Claim 39 which is a prophylactic/therapeutic agent for neuropathy.

42. A composition according to Claim 39 which is a prophylactic/therapeutic agent for peripheral neuropathy.

43. 4-(4-Chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-[3-(2-methylphenoxy)propyl]oxazole or a salt thereof.

44. A crystal of 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-[3-(2-methylphenoxy)propyl]oxazole or a salt thereof.

45. 4-(4-Chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-[3-(3-methylphenoxy)propyl]oxazole or a salt thereof.

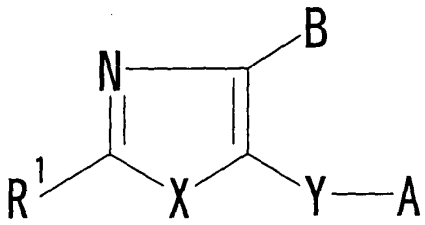
46. A crystal of 4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)-5-[3-(3-methylphenoxy)propyl]oxazole or a salt thereof.

47. 5-[3-(4-Chloro-2-methylphenoxy)propyl]-4-(4-

chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)oxazole or a salt thereof.

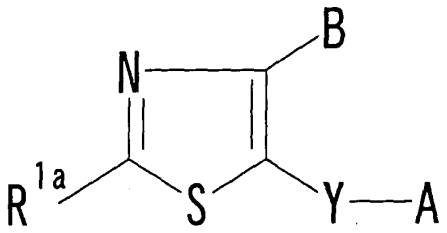
48. A crystal of 5-[3-(4-chloro-2-methylphenoxy)propyl]-4-(4-chlorophenyl)-2-(2-methyl-1-imidazolyl)oxazole or a salt thereof.

49. A method for promoting neurotrophin production/secretion in a mammal in need thereof, which comprises administering to said mammal an effective amount of an azole derivative of the formula :



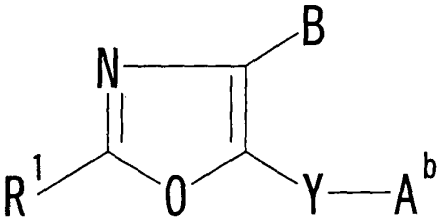

wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; X represents oxygen atom, sulfur atom, or nitrogen atom which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

50. A method for promoting neurotrophin production/secretion in a mammal in need thereof, which comprises administering to said mammal an effective amount of a thiazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^{1a}$ represents a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

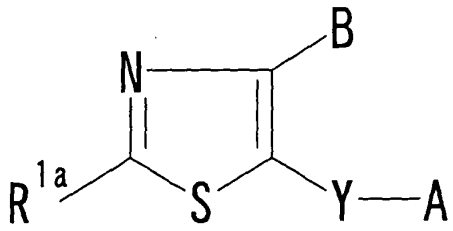
51. A method for promoting neurotrophin production/secretion in a mammal in need thereof, which comprises administering to said mammal an effective amount of an oxazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; $A^b$ represents an aryloxy group which is substituted by an alkyl group and may further be substituted; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

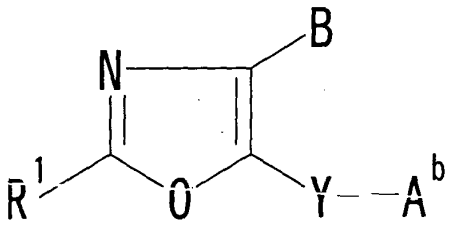
52. A method for preventing or treating neuropathy in a

mammal in need thereof, which comprises administering to said mammal an effective amount of a thiazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^{1a}$ represents a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

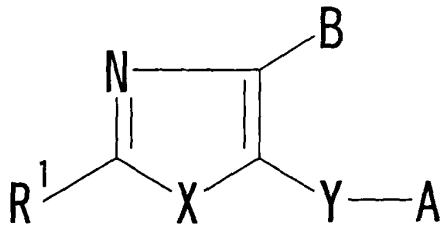
53. A method for preventing or treating neuropathy in a mammal in need thereof, which comprises administering to said mammal an effective amount of an oxazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; $A^b$ represents an aryloxy group which is substituted by an alkyl group and may further be substituted; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent

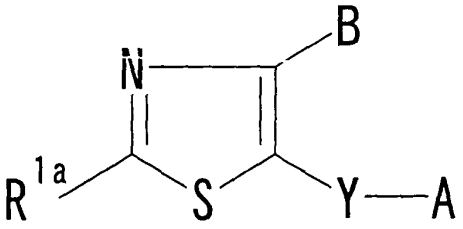
hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof.

54. Use of an azole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; X represents oxygen atom, sulfur atom, or nitrogen atom which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof, for the manufacture of a neurotrophin production/secretion promoting agent.

55. Use of a thiazole derivative of the formula :

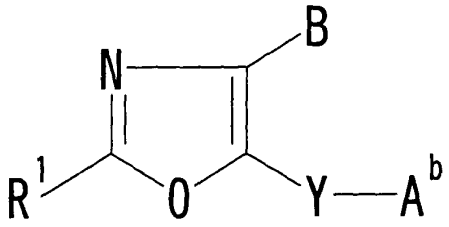


wherein $R^{1a}$ represents a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may

optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof,

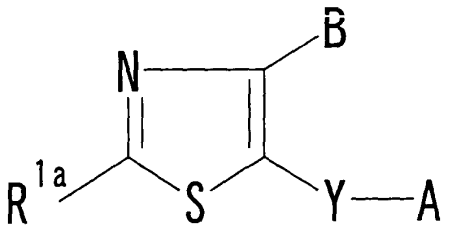
for the manufacture of a neurotrophin production/secretion promoting agent.

56. Use of an oxazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; $A^b$ represents an aryloxy group which is substituted by an alkyl group and may further be substituted; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof, for the manufacture of a neurotrophin production/secretion promoting agent.

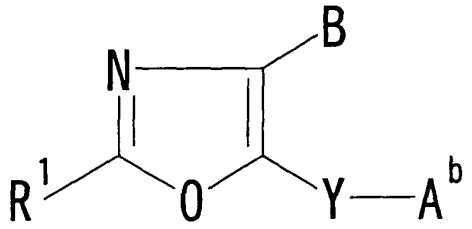
57. Use of a thiazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^{1a}$ represents a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted; A represents an acyl group which may optionally be substituted, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may

optionally be substituted, or a carboxyl group which may optionally be esterified or amidated; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof,
for the manufacture of a pharmaceutical preparation for preventing or treating neuropathy.

58. Use of an oxazole derivative of the formula :



wherein $R^1$ represents a halogen atom, a heterocyclic group which may optionally be substituted, a hydroxy group which may optionally be substituted, a thiol group which may optionally be substituted, or an amino group which may optionally be substituted; $A^b$ represents an aryloxy group which is substituted by an alkyl group and may further be substituted; B represents an aromatic group which may optionally be substituted; and Y represents a divalent hydrocarbon group or heterocyclic group, or a salt thereof,
for the manufacture of a pharmaceutical preparation for preventing or treating neuropathy.